Ottawa metro

Your essential daily news | TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017

High -1°C/Low -2°C A mess of snow

JOHANNA SCHNELLER
Thank you for being our ambassador for empathy
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CLOSE BUT ...

Crews are getting close to opening the Rideau Canal, but still need Mother Nature's help to open skateway

metroNEWS

Province to back Ottawa injection site

SANDY HILL

Funding will help pay $1.4M proposed program

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa's proposed supervised injection site will have provincial backing and cash behind it, Ontario's health minister said Monday.

In a statement, Minster Eric Hoskins said he was writing a letter of support for the proposed site at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre.

"My office spoke with the Association of Ontario Health Centres and shared my letter of support to the federal government for the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre's proposed safe injection site and that we will be providing financial support for their proposal," he said.

Hoskins also announced the province would support three proposed centres in Toronto.

He said the government would be setting up a process to allow municipalities and other agencies to apply for funding for new injections sites.

"Given the importance of this issue, we are also developing a provincial framework in order to respond to the safe injection site proposals from Toronto and Ottawa, as well as other municipalities or other applicants," said Hoskins.

Hoskins said supervised injection sites make sense to deal with the opioid epidemic.

"I believe that community-supported and community-run supervised injection services will not only save lives, but also must be part of a larger strategy for harm reduction," he said.

Rob Boyd, director of the Oasis program at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, said it was a relief to hear the government will help pay for the $1.4 million cost of their proposed program.

"This is a health intervention so we would want the ministry of health to provide the funding for it."

The proposal from the centre would see the hours of their Oasis program expanded to 12 hours a day, as well as an addition of a supervised injection service. The program currently offers a needle exchange, counseling and other medical services.

Boyd said when they started talking about the program the community made it clear it had to be about more than an injection site.

He said their board will meet on Jan. 18, to make a final decision on submitting their application and he hopes the site could be operating by summer.

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RESEARCH

Two-tier kidney surgeries

A new study conducted by Ottawa researchers has found that if you're an Ontario resident on dialysis treatment the likelihood that you receive a new kidney varies widely based on the region you live in.

"In theory Ontario has a universal health care system, but our study found that patients registered in some regional kidney programs were more likely to receive a transplant than others," said researcher Greg Knoll, a senior scientist at the Ottawa Hospital and professor at the University of Ottawa.

The study looked at 23,022 patients who were on dialysis in Ontario over a 10-year period.

It found that 46.1 per cent of patients died and 11.8 per cent received a transplant — but the percentage of patients who received a transplant was inconsistent across the province's 27 regional programs.

The programs had transplant rates that ranged from seven per cent at lowest to 31 per cent in a different region. The study found 15 of the kidney care programs were performing transplants at the expected rate, while six programs were performing better than expected and six lower.

The final paper does not rank the programs or reveal where the highest percentages are.

"It wasn't a ranking exercise to determine who is best or worse," said Knoll. "It did indeed show that there is a wide variably in access to transplantation depending on what region in the province you live in."

Knoll said future studies will look at how different regions perform on each step of the transplant process — including referrals, tests, waiting lists and surgery.

"The next step is determining why there is the variability and to see where we can improve some of the areas where the patients have lower access. That's perhaps the most important thing that will come out of this," he said.

HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

"The next step is determining why there is the variability and to see where we can improve.
Greg Knoll

Claridge reveals 55-storey vision for LeBreton Flats

DEVELOPMENT

Project would include mix of residential units: Firm

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

Claridge unveiled its plan to the public Monday for the expanded "East Flats" development at the Bronson Centre. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

Claridge shared its vision for the next step of LeBreton Flats with the public Monday, revealing a 55-storey tower in the middle of expansive parkland and historic touches.

The expanded plan for "East Flats," unveiled at a community consultation event, focuses on a mixture of 1,650 residential units — including condos, rentals, affordable housing and apartments for seniors.

The mock-ups also include extensive parkland, with historic bridges worked in along the aqueduct and a consideration for bike lanes.

The focal point building will be 55 storeys, which would make it one of the city's tallest structures. Other surrounding buildings will be a maximum of 30 storeys.

"There are tall buildings, most people will want to talk about that, but there's also a very interesting park system," said George Dark from Urban Strategies Inc., the firm working with Claridge on the design of the project.

While the land is situated in a National Capital Commission area, much of the greenspace is controlled by the City of Ottawa, and Dark said Claridge intends to keep that as public land.

"We think it's a good plan and we want people to see it," he said.

Dark said the unique development of Ottawa around the peace tower means you won't see soaring towers in the downtown core. Instead the area just west and east of downtown makes the most sense for density.

While there was loud opposition to the height from some members of the public attending the presentation, others in attendance — including Coun. Jeff Leiper — said they aren't opposed to intensification as long as there is a market.

Dark said that density will also allow the development to attract essential businesses like grocery stores.

Mike Johansen and Andrea Ryan, who live in the yellow-brick tower that went up in an earlier phase of the larger plan, said they like the presentation so far.

"I'm very encouraged by what we're seeing," said Johansen. Both said they are eager to see amenities like a grocery store or a new central library within walking distance.

"55 storeys does sound really tall to me, I think maybe that's too much," said Ryan, adding that one giant building might be too imposing on its own. "But it would be great to be able to walk to a grocery store."

HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

POLICE

Suspects charged after Vanier restaurant robbery

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

Police have charged two Ottawa men after a Vanier restaurant robbery Sunday night, with one accused of breaching his probation and another who was sought on an October warrant.

Around 8 p.m. Sunday, police were called to a robbery involving two men and at least one handgun around 200 Montreal Rd. When police arrived with a canine unit, the suspects fled.

Police later found them barricaded in an apartment at 296 Blake Blvd. Officers arrested four men and one woman.

Dylan Meulmeester, 23, and Mathew Carlsson, 28, both face a string of charges including robbery, conspiracy, obstructing a peace officer, wearing a disguise, and pointing a firearm.

Meulmeester is accused of breaching a recognizance. Carlsson is accused of breaching an undertaking, which is a similar charge. Carlsson was also sought on an arrest warrant after a Parkdale Avenue convenience store was robbed on Oct. 30, 2016.

Two people were released without charge, while a fifth person will soon face charges of obstruction, and possessing property obtained by crime.

"When it's an armed robbery with a handgun, that escalates it on the spectrum of violence," Staff Sgt. Mike Haarbosch told Metro. "The officers did excellent work tracking down the suspects' location and getting five people into custody."

Charges were still pending as of Monday morning. It's unclear whether the investigation is linked to a December 19 stabbing on Richelieu Avenue, which the robbery unit is also investigation.

HAVE A TIP?

Police want anyone with information to phone the robbery unit at 613-236-1222, ext. 5116, or to call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS).

metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Not all that glitters is gold, as people are swindled into buying bars of copper. **Canada**

Ottawa's film industry has record $100-million year

MOVIES

Half spent in animation, rest in drama, reality shows

When it comes to lights, camera, action, 2016 was Ottawa's equivalent of a box office smash.

"It was record-breaking," said Bruce Harvey, Ottawa's film commissioner.

Last year, $100 million in "foreign funds" were spent in Ottawa, most of it from the U.S. and elsewhere in Canada. Half of that was in the animation field, with the other half neatly split between live-action French and English drama, reality and lifestyle shows.

"All of that $100 million spins out into the economy and then stays here, multiplying within our economy," Harvey said of the benefit.

While it's difficult to predict how well Ottawa will fare in 2017 since producers often don't book locations well in advance of a shoot, a number of Canada 150 birthday events, such as the CFL Grey Cup game and the Red Bull Crashed Ice competition, will draw cameras.

"There's a lot of events that will attract tourism and travel shows," said Stephanie Davy, co-ordinator of the Ottawa Film Office.

That means there will be shoots in a variety of iconic Ottawa locations.

"The intention is for them to come back afterwards. So we do hope that works for film as well," said Harvey. "Maybe they'll see a location they like and think of setting something here in future."

Ottawa already has several advantages that have helped it secure a corner of the production market, placing it in the top six or seven of production hot spots in Canada.

It has prime shooting locations and crews can quickly access remote and urban locations here within a short time frame, saving time and money. This has, in part, helped draw several horror movie productions, which tend to be on a tighter budget.

But there are "inherent hurdles" Harvey would like to smooth out to make Ottawa more attractive as a TV and film hot spot.

While Ottawa is home to a solid crew base, there is a need for those working on the business side, such as accountants. And as a nation's capital, producers face challenges in navigating multiple layers of bureaucracy.

"There are different levels of government that have to be co-ordinated," Harvey acknowledged.

For instance, there is an RCMP-controlled zone around Parliament Hill, which means camera drones can't be used to shoot at the nearby Confederation Park. Crews wanting to cross the provincial border into Quebec to shoot a scene are faced with more permission requirements.

And they can lose their Ontario filming subsidy when they cross over to Gatineau to film a scene there.

"It would be good if the National Capital Region was treated as one region," Harvey said.

Harvey said securing dedicated studio space with three stages totaling at least 3,716 square metres would also be a game-changer in Ottawa.

"There's some (TV) shows that are never going to come here until we get a studio, and then there's others that won't come here until we get our crew base going up," said Harvey.

He and Davy are working with different groups in the city to create a space, and the hope is this could become a reality within the next two years. However, it will largely depend on interest shown by enough developers, which can leverage support from different levels of government.

Having founded a production company in Calgary in 1990, Harvey said the former military base there translates into 9,290 square metres of studio space where shows such as Heartland, Fargo and Hell on Wheels have sets.

Such a space here would produce enormous economic benefits.

It costs about $1.8 million to shoot an episode of CBC's Heartland, which features 18 episodes per series. Game of Thrones costs more than $10 million an episode.

"One good series doubles what we do. So it can make a big, big difference," said Harvey, a Genie Award-winning film and TV producer.

A few years ago, the city committed $1.5 million, but Harvey said it will take a double-digit-million-dollar figure to make a dent.

ERIN MCCRACKEN/OTTAWA COMMUNITY NEWS

Bruce Harvey, the city's film commissioner, and Stephanie Davy, co-ordinator of the Ottawa Film Office, are working with different groups in the city to create a dedicated studio space. ERIN MCCRACKEN/OTTAWA COMMUNITY NEWS

> **$10 million**
>
> Cost of a single episode of the series Game of Thrones, according to Ottawa's Film Commissioner.

> **"There's some (TV) shows that are never going to come here until we get a studio.**
>
> Bruce Harvey

MAINTENANCE

Museums close for upkeep

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

Three of the capital region's top museums are closed this week for maintenance, but officials say it won't hinder the city's Canada 150 tourism push.

Until Friday, the war and nature museums in Ottawa will be closed, as will the history museum in Gatineau.

At the Canadian Museum of Nature, cleaners mounted on jack-lifts are dusting dinosaur skeletons, according to marketing director John Swettenham.

"This week in particular, it's the quietest it gets," said Swettenham, who believes the museum has been closed the first full week of each year for the past two decades. "It inconveniences the least number of our customers overall."

Swettenham said the museums have pondered alternating maintenance weeks, but determined it would short-change visitors on a busier week, while not leading to any cost savings. He also noted that schools wait until mid-month to start field trips.

That's left staff with time to clean artifacts, including a whale skeleton whose oily bones require a special chemical rub.

Over at the Canadian Museum of History, specialists are delicately cleaning totem poles and dismantling temporary exhibitions while inspecting the IMAX theatre.

"We chose the week with the least impact and least disruption for visitors," said spokeswoman Patricia Lynch.

Ottawa Tourism spokeswoman Jantine Van Kregten said that's a sign of a vibrant museum sector. "It is unfortunate that the museums have to close, but It's good news because they are refreshing their options. It's a necessary evil."

Meanwhile, the Rideau Canal remains closed to skaters as the weather warms up later this week. Van Kregten suggests skaters opt for Lansdowne Park or the Rink of Dreams outside City Hall, or the Sir John A. Macdonald Winter Trail. She suggests indoor activities like escape rooms, axe-throwing and shopping can keep cold-weary tourists busy.

COURT

Lawyers concerned by lawsuit backlog

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa lawyers say delays in the criminal justice system are now stalling civil suits too.

In July 2016, the Supreme Court set hard timelines for criminal trials. Known as the Jordan case, the decision clarified an accused person's right to be tried within a reasonable timeframe. But it caused outrage in November when an Ottawa judge allowed first-degree murder suspect Adam Picard to walk free because he'd been held without a trial for almost four years.

Last year, the Ontario Crown Attorneys Association warned judges could dismiss roughly 6,000 criminal cases because of mounting delays and a lack of judges. But now civil lawyers — who deal with injuries and property disputes — say their cases are being increasingly delayed, and they believe it's because judges are hearing criminal cases instead of civil ones, for fear of throwing out cases and leaving victims outraged.

Joseph Obagi, an Ottawa personal injury lawyer, is among them. He said any civil trial requiring a jury that's expected to last more than two weeks is being scheduled in April 2019.

Even worse, civil lawyers like himself are showing up for trials that take years to plan, only to have a judge postpone a case with no timeline. "It's not great to be scheduling things two years out, but at least at the end of it you used to know that your trial's going ahead no matter what. Now, we're not so sure."

Ontario Superior Court — which tries all serious criminal cases like murder as well as detailed civil cases — has nine vacancies and 273 sitting judges.

Obagi says Eastern Ontario has roughly 30 of those judges, along with four vacancies. That means that while Ontario overall is missing four per cent of its federally appointed judges, Eastern Ontario lacks 13 per cent and is set to reach 26 per cent vacancy. The provincial and federal government did not confirm these numbers.

6,000

Rough amount of criminal cases that could be dismissed by judges due to delays according to Ontario Crown Attorneys.

Canal being flooded but not yet ready for skating

WEATHER

Extended cold snap needed to create safe amount of ice

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

The canal has been flooded from Dow's Lake to downtown, but the National Capital Commission says they'll need a final push from Mother Nature to finally open the skateway.

Cédric Pelletier, spokesperson for the NCC, said while he's been getting plenty of questions from friends and the public, there's no secret confirmed date to reveal.

"Operations are going well right now. Over the weekend we managed to do a lot of flooding," he said. "We're building ice, we're working hard, but we haven't reached the 30 cm of good quality ice that we need to open the skateway."

The area from Dow's Lake all the way downtown has been flooded, giving the surface a familiar icy pale yellow appearance.

If conditions on the Rideau River are any indication, the ice is slowly building up.

The Petrie Island ice fishing village in the east end is waving the yellow caution flag, with an average ice thickness of 25 cm and slush in certain areas recorded on the bay on Jan. 6.

But Pelletier said the minimum 30 cm forming on the canal will need to be good quality ice — characterized by NCC experts as having few air bubbles and cracks.

"We'll keep flooding the skateway surface in the coming days, while also monitoring the weather conditions," he said. "We have a team of experts that is used to the Canadian weather that fluctuates."

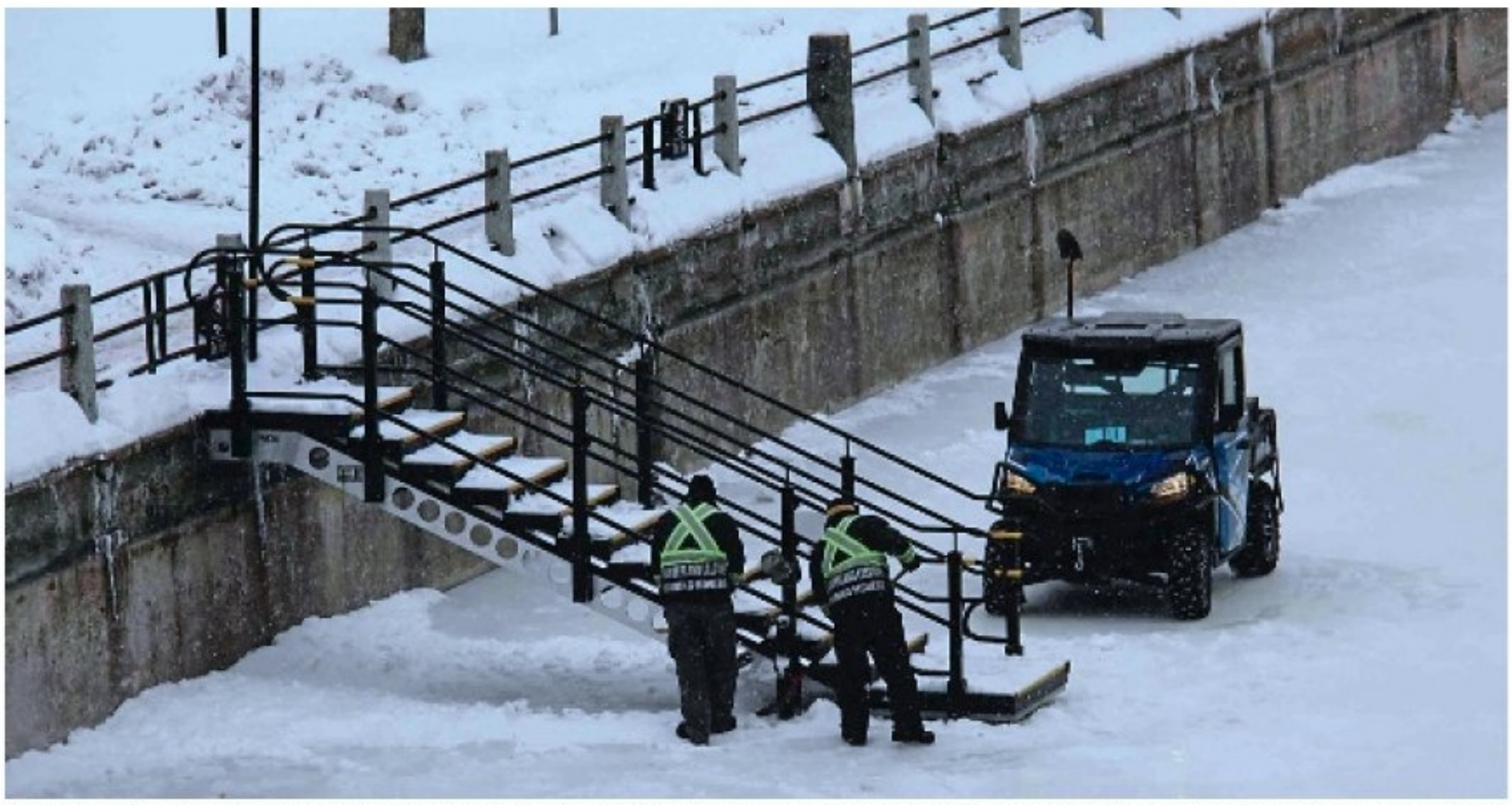
> **We're building ice, we're working hard, but we haven't reached the 30 cm of good quality ice that we need to open the skateway.**
> Cédric Pelletier

Before the canal can open Ottawa will need a consistent period of cold — at least 10 days around negative 15 C with little or no snowfall is the ideal condition for freeze-up.

This week temperatures are set to rise to zero, followed by a couple days of freezing and more mild weather.

Last month the NCC sent out a release warning residents to keep off the canal until the official skateway opening. Pelletier said that warning still stands.

"Right now we're asking the public to stay off the ice," he said. "We want to open the skateway as soon as we can."



Crews work to install stairs on a section of the skateway on Monday. Despite these positive signs the canal is not yet safe and people should stay off of it. HALEY RITCHIE /METRO

COMMERCE

Ottawa chamber chair steps down amid sanction battle

Craig Lord
Ottawa Business Journal

The Ottawa chamber of commerce is currently without a chairperson as its former board leader, Marie Boivin, continues to battle sanctions by the U.S. Treasury Department that have forced the temporary closure of her currency exchange business.

A chamber spokesperson told OBJ that "Ms. Boivin is no longer the chair" but declined further comment. The organization's website no longer lists a chairperson in its board of directors listing.

Meanwhile, Ottawa-based currency exchange service Accu-Rate Corp., where Boivin serves as director and which was also sanctioned by the Treasury Department, is halting service for an "undetermined period of time."

In a statement on its website, Accu-Rate says it is in the process of having both the company and Boivin removed from the Treasury Department's sanctions list and is working to remedy the situation for affected clients.

Last September, the Treasury Department imposed sanctions on 12 individuals and 24 entities as part of a money laundering investigation into allegations of fraud by Vancouver-based PacNet Services Ltd.

Accu-Rate was sanctioned, along with Boivin and president Paul Davis, after the Treasury Department alleged that it was part of a network of entities that had processed payments in a series of mail fraud schemes.

Last week, a Treasury Department spokesperson declined to comment on the progress of these allegations or any defence by Accu-Rate or Boivin.

Boivin declined to comment for this article. In an email to Business in Vancouver in September, she denied any allegations of wrongdoing.

A shakeup for Cabinet members

GOVERNMENT

PM to reshuffle team in wake of Trump presidency

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds a news conference with his cabinet after they were sworn in at Rideau Hall, in Ottawa on Nov. 4, 2015. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is expected to give his year-old cabinet a facelift on Tuesday, shifting some weak ministers and promoting strong performers as his government braces for Donald Trump's imminent ascension to the U.S. presidency.

Sources tell The Canadian Press that the shuffle will involve at least six people.

Those expected to be moved include International Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland, who is believed likely to replace Stephane Dion at Foreign Affairs.

Freeland, a former economics journalist with extensive contacts in the United States, is credited with deftly navigating through some eleventh-hour obstacles that threatened last fall to scupper the Canada-European Union free trade agreement — potentially valuable experience for dealing with the incoming Trump administration.

Trump, whose inauguration takes place Jan. 20, has vowed to adopt an unapologetically protectionist, America-first policy on trade, including re-opening or even tearing up the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Dion's tenure at Foreign Affairs has been a rocky one, marred by controversy over his approval of a $15-billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia. His prickly demeanour could also be ill-suited to dealing with the unpredictable Trump, who has demonstrated a tendency to easily take offence.

Rumours have swirled for months that Dion was to be named ambassador to France but he has denied any interest in the plum post.

News of the shuffle leaked out Monday, just as the Prime Minister's Office confirmed that Trudeau's two top aides, Katie Telford and Gerald Butts, have been meeting with some of Trump's senior advisers, building bridges to the incoming administration.

Also believed to be in the shuffle mix are Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu, seen as a strong performer, and Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef, widely criticized for her handling of Trudeau's promise to reform Canada's voting system.

Employment Minister Mary-Ann Mihychuk is also expected to be moved.

Sources, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose details publicly, expect at least one new face in cabinet: Francois-Philippe Champagne, parliamentary secretary to Finance Minister Bill Morneau.

In his first cabinet of 30 ministers, Trudeau famously appointed an equal number of men and women "because it's 2015." That parity was upset last fall when Hunter Tootoo resigned from cabinet and the Liberal caucus to seek treatment for alcohol addiction following what he later admitted was an inappropriate relationship with a female staffer.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

AGA KHAN TRIP

Tory MP calls for ethics probe

Conservative leadership candidate Andrew Scheer has asked Parliament's ethics commissioner to decide whether Justin Trudeau's secret family vacation to the Aga Khan's private island was an improper "gift" that constitutes a conflict of interest for the prime minister.

In a letter dated Sunday, the Saskatchewan MP pointed out that the Aga Khan's foundation in Canada has received tens of millions of dollars in international development contracts from the federal government, as well as funds for the organization's headquarters in Ottawa. Scheer wrote that the family vacation was a "private gift" from the billionaire religious leader that may have breached the Conflict of Interest Act.

Fellow Tory leadership hopeful Kellie Leitch also called for an investigation on Twitter.

"The prime minister of Canada must be held to the highest standard," Scheer said in a statement. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Police are warning Edmontonians not to buy gold unless it's been properly tested. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

EDMONTON

Fraudsters turn copper into gold

Kevin Maimann
Metro | Edmonton

About once a month, someone comes into Sarah Patterson-Robert's store trying to hawk fake gold.

"Usually I can tell really quick whether or not they know that it's fake and they're trying to rip me off, because they'll make a face when I say I have to test it, or they'll grab it and run," said Patterson-Robert, who's the manager of Edmonton Gold, a shop that buys and sells precious metals.

"Occasionally the person trying to sell it to me was ripped off, because they are just devastated when they're told it's fake."

Indeed, some Edmontonians got a painful reminder Monday that not all that glitters is gold.

Police say about 20 merchants and individuals in the city have been swindled into buying bars of fake gold for $300 to $800 each.

Their actual value? Less than one dollar apiece.

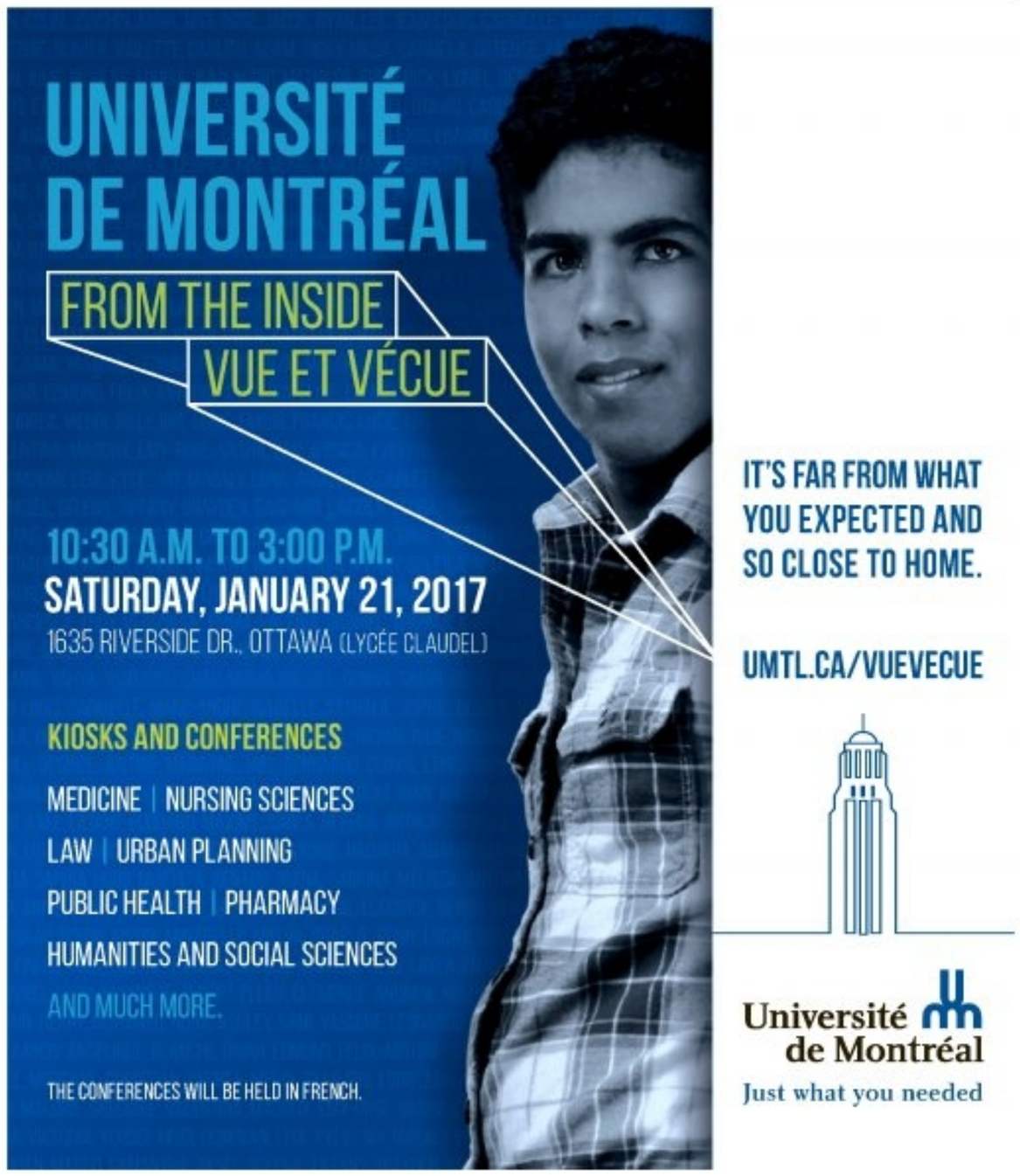
"It's a significant loss of money for them," said Edmonton Police Service Const. Robert Wellon, with the criminal investigation section.

Police found the bars were covered in real gold but made from 94 to 96 per cent copper after an investigation, following a similar scam that was uncovered in Winnipeg last month.

They recovered the bars which combined had a total of 220 grams of gold, which they peg at a total market value of $10,000.

Patterson-Robert offers to test every piece of gold she sells in front of the customer, and said no one should buy from someone who isn't able to do that.

"There's a lot of people who believe that we're going to be going back to a gold-based system — they think that regular money isn't going to be worth anything," Patterson-Robert said.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TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

From son-in-law to senior adviser

President-elect Donald Trump's influential son-in-law Jared Kushner will join him in the White House as a senior adviser, transition officials said Monday, putting the young real estate executive in position to exert broad sway over both domestic and foreign policy, particularly Middle East issues and trade negotiations.

Jared Kushner
AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Trump has come to rely heavily on Kushner, who is married to the president-elect's daughter Ivanka. Since the election, Kushner has been one of the transition team's main liaisons to foreign governments, communicating with Israeli officials and meeting last week with Britain's foreign minister. He's also huddled with congressional leaders and helped interview Cabinet candidates.

His eligibility could be challenged. But Kushner lawyer Jamie Gorelick argued Monday that a 1967 law meant to bar government officials from hiring relatives does not apply to the West Wing. She cited a later congressional measure to allow the president "unfettered" and "sweeping" authority in hiring staff.

Kushner, who will not be taking a salary, will resign as CEO of his family's real estate company and as publisher of the New York Observer, as well as divest "substantial assets," Gorelick said. She said Kushner will recuse himself "from particular matters that would have a direct and predictable effect on his remaining financial interests." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Obama nets high approval, but he didn't unite nation

UNITED STATES

Over half of Americans hold favourable view of president

More Americans feel Barack Obama's presidency divided the country than feel it brought people together, a new poll shows. Yet he leaves office held in high esteem by a solid majority.

Eight years after Obama's historic election, just 27 per cent see the U.S. as more united as a result of his presidency, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted after the 2016 election. Far more — 44 per cent — say it's more divided.

Those figures underscore one of the key contradictions of Obama's presidency. By and large, Americans like him. Yet, aside from the big "Obamacare" health care overhaul, he has been unable to translate that approval into congressional majorities to fulfil many of his goals.

"It's one of the few regrets of my presidency — that the rancour and suspicion between the parties has gotten worse instead of better," Obama said last January in his final State of the Union address.

Still, 57 per cent say they view Obama favourably, putting him way ahead of his predecessor, George W. Bush, and on par with Bill Clinton at the end of their two terms. Clinton had the same 57 per cent but Bush just 40, according to Gallup polling at the time. Bush's father fared better, with 62 per cent viewing him favourably at the end of his time in office.

Just over half say Obama's presidency has been great or good. Thirty-seven per cent view him unfavourably. Did he keep his promises? He did not, in the minds of 2 of 3 Americans, though 44 per cent say he tried.

There's frustration even among many longtime Obama supporters about the lack of movement on major priorities such as overhauling the nation's immigration laws, enacting gun control measures and shutting the prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"He acted very presidential, but he just couldn't get things done," said Dale Plath, a retired sales manager from Mason City, Iowa. He said he voted for Obama the first time, voted against him the second, and this year, Plath said: "I voted for change, frankly" — in the form of Donald Trump.

Obama leaves office more popular than he was just a few years ago. In December 2014, the month after Democrats lost control of the Senate, just 41 per cent said they viewed him favourably in an AP-GfK poll.

His complicated legacy comes into sharper focus when it comes to race. Nearly 8 in 10 African-Americans view the nation's first black president favourably, but far fewer see his presidency as having yielded the type of profound changes for black Americans that many had hoped.

Just 43 per cent of African-Americans say Obama made things better for black people, while roughly half say they see no difference. Six per cent say Obama has made things worse. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An ale pectoral sandpiper on the tundra near Barrow, Alaska, calls out in the futile hope of attracting a female. BART KEMPENAERS/MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR ORNITHOLOGY VIA AP

WILDLIFE

'Failed Don Juans' won't stop looking for a mate

You fly more than 100 miles for love. You get rejected. You fly another 100 miles. Another rejection. And another.

That's the high-flying but futile sex life of the male pectoral sandpiper looking for love in northernmost Alaska, according to a new study.

Some males are more persistent than others. Researchers tracked one desperate small shorebird that logged more than 8,100 miles (13,045 kilometres) in two dozen different hook-up attempts over a frenetic four weeks.

"They're definitely trying hard to flirt and court," said biologist Bart Kempenaers of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Germany . "They are not particularly successful most of them. Failed Don Juans mostly."

Sandpipers migrate from South America to breeding grounds in the Arctic tundra in the summer. The males tend to be sex crazy during this time because females are only fertile for a few weeks. They flit all over the place, trying hard to seal the deal with loud throaty hoots as many times as possible. The problem for them is that the females only mate once or twice a season.

"Copulations are incredibly rare," Kempenaers said. "The males need to try and try and keep at it."

Researchers tracked the activity of 100 male birds during a breeding season. It is "the most extreme example" of promiscuity in animals seen yet, said Kempenaers, who led the study published Monday in the journal Nature .

The males mostly forgo sleep as they embark on non-stop flights in search of a mate, getting by on snatches of shut-eye lasting several seconds at a time, Kempenaers said.

The average bird flies about 110 miles (178 kilometres) between mating attempts. In a breeding season, the males log on average about 1,900 miles (3,060 kilometres), a bit farther than flying from Los Angeles to Chicago.

Sandpipers can fly 40 hours non-stop around 37 mph (60 kph), but these long trips often end up in rejections. Those that successfully mate don't have a role in raising the offspring, Kempenaers said.

George Divoky, a biologist at the scientific group Friends of Cooper Island that monitors the changing Alaskan Arctic, said in general Arctic shorebirds are shrinking in population.

He called the study on this species of bird impressive, adding that it "will make me think differently about every pectoral sandpiper I see during the summer." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Snake on a plane: Flight halted in serpent spotting

Once Samuel L. Jackson appeared in Dubai, it really was only a matter of time before the snake on a plane turned up. Dubai-based airline Emirates said that one of its flights from Muscat, Oman, to Dubai was cancelled after a snake was spotted. Passengers hadn't yet boarded the Boeing 777. Jackson, who starred in the thriller "Snakes on a Plane," was in Dubai last month for the Dubai International Film Festival. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canada hot for cruise ships

TOURISM

Port cities are anticipating a surge in visitors

Canadian port cities expect to get an economic boost this summer from an influx of cruise visitors attracted by a low loonie and the country's 150th birthday celebrations.

Ports across Atlantic Canada, Quebec and British Columbia are anticipating a surge in cruise traffic.

"Canada is hot right now," Pierre Bellerose of Montreal's tourism board said in an interview.

With the opening in May of a $78-million refurbished passenger terminal, the Port of Montreal anticipates the number of cruise passengers and crew members will be up 28 per cent from last year to 110,000 as the city celebrates its 375th birthday and Canada's sesquicentennial.

"The Port of Montreal is at the heart of those celebrations," said port CEO Sylvie Vachon. "We know that maritime trade has played an important role in the development of the city and the entire country."

The Port of Montreal is expecting 110,000 cruise passengers and crew this summer as the city celebrates its 375th birthday and Canada's sesquicentennial. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The extra passengers are expected to generate an additional $5.5 million in local spending, raising the total this year to about $30 million, says Tourisme Montreal.

Ports in Atlantic Canada are also anticipating double-digit increases in 2017 above the nearly 600,000 passengers that landed last year, said Brian Webb, executive director of Cruise Atlantic Canada.

"It's looking great across the board, so every single port looks to be seeing increases," he said from Nova Scotia.

Newfoundland and Labrador is expecting a record cruise season with an expected 99,266 passenger and crew visits, up from 50,448 passenger and crew visits in 2016.

"We're definitely excited about the increases because it will mean increased economic activity," Webb added.

While in Canadian ports, cruise ship passengers spent almost $262 million or nearly $150 per person in 2012, according to the latest study conducted by the industry. Average spending was highest in B.C. ports, which accounted for 54 per cent of the more than two million passenger visits and 77 per cent of spending.

The Port of Halifax, largest in Atlantic Canada, welcomed 238,000 cruise passengers in 2016, up seven per cent from the prior year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WHY THEY COME

- The low value of the Canadian dollar encouraged cruise lines a couple of years ago to add routes this summer.
- Canada's birthday celebrations, the Tall Ships gathering in Halifax from July 29 to Aug. 1 and increased tourism efforts across the region are also contributing factors

INVESTING

Firm buys into pot testing lab

Ottawa-based cannabis investment firm CannaRoyalty Corp. says it's acquiring a 20 per cent stake in Anandia Laboratories Inc., a company that specializes in marijuana testing, in a deal valued at $4 million.

There are currently seven licensed cannabis producers in Canada who are working with the Vancouver-based cannabis biotechnology company to test their products. A report by the federally appointed task force on marijuana highlighted the importance of testing cannabis products to ensure they're safe for consumption.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

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TSX 15,388.95 (–107.10)
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GOLD $1,184.90 US (+$11.50)
NATURAL GAS: $3.10 US (–18¢)
DOW JONES: 19,887.38 (–76.42)

Chris Yenna's 'Ice NV' portable ice resurfacer. CONTRIBUTED

ENTREPRENEUR

Mini machine is super-cool

Colin McNeil
Metro | Toronto

It could be the most Canadian invention ever: a miniaturized, do-it-yourself ice resurfacing machine.

Made with backyard rink hobbyists and small communities that can't afford full-sized ice resurfacing machines in mind, Chris Yenna's creation is a compact, portable version of the ice cleaner we're accustomed to seeing at NHL-sized rinks.

"The end result is the same," the Calgary entrepreneur told Metro. "I just basically made everything smaller."

While even relatively simple ice cleaners can run you $10,000 or more, Yenna said his 'Ice NV' portable ice resurfacer would cost significantly less than the big, traditional ice cleaners, which retail around $100,000.

He was hesitant to quote prices, with his creation still in the prototype stage. "I just kind of Frankensteined it," he said. "I didn't prepare myself for this (attention) in the beginning."

No stranger to the outdoor ice game, the Facebook page for his creation, Porta Ice Ltd., proclaims Yenna has "15+ years of ice maintenance experience and has installed and maintained portable ice rinks in over 40 countries and five continents worldwide."

"I've always had the dream," he said, "to show there can be quality ice out there."

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Your essential daily news
Tuesday, January 10, 2017

EMMA TEITEL ON THE RIGHT TO DISCONNECT

At this very moment France is not in the business of building on the tools of mass communication; it's in the business of restricting them.

Despite a reputation for standoffishness (especially with tourists) the French have invented some of the most important mass communication tools in human history. These include the papermaking machine, the Bic Cristal ballpoint pen (who doesn't have one of those?), and the bane of high school principals everywhere: the mobile software that enables us to share photos on our cellphones en masse, i.e. the DNA of the nude selfie.

This history is interesting and odd, because at this very moment France is not in the business of building on the tools of mass communication; it's in the business of restricting them.

I'm referring to the country's new "right to disconnect law" that went into effect on New Year's Day (along with a series of other labour-related regulations): a law that makes it illegal for employers to intrude on employees' private time via email after working hours.

More specifically, the law requires that companies with 50 or more staff members work with unions and employees to devise a policy that prevents the intrusion of office emails into workers' leisure time. The "Right to Disconnect" policy comes on the heels of a French study about the scourge of so-called "info-obesity": the suffering health of French workers who are constantly connected to their emails outside working hours. Curtail that connection, argues French Labour Minister Myriam El Khomri, and everybody — bosses and charges alike — will be better off.

So it goes that the nation that invented the software that keeps Kim Kardashian's selfie empire afloat has taken a vow of technological temperance.

The question now for those of us who live outside of that nation is should we follow suit? Should we do as the French do, and demand: "No longer will our vacations be cut short by uncharitable bosses who refuse to respect the authority of our Out of Office autoreplies?" Our answer, judging by fawning headlines and editorials heralding the right to disconnect, is a resounding yes. As a rule, liberal North Americans love to heap praise on progressive European social policy, and it appears this case is no exception.

Now that France has passed a law that makes it illegal for employers to intrude on employees' private time via email outside working hours, the question for the rest of us is: Should we follow suit? TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

And why should it be? The law, after all, is a step in the right direction toward reviving the fast fading line between work and play (a line that is likely to go extinct without government intervention.)

But unfortunately, the law is also a Band-Aid solution to a much deeper problem. Excessive emailing isn't the prime enemy of leisure time in the modern work world. We are the enemy. That is, our addiction to technology is the enemy.

It's an addiction that motivates 87 per cent of U.S. workers, according to an American survey from 2015, to check their emails outside work hours everyday, and provokes the average smartphone user, according to a study from 2013, to check Facebook 14 times a day. It's an addiction, according to another study, from the U.K., that triggers university students who are separated from their technology for 24 hours to suffer withdrawal symptoms similar to those exhibited by heavy cigarette smokers.

It's an addiction, in other words, that cannot be legislated away, because its pervasiveness is as much the fault of Internet-obsessed employees as it is inconsiderate bosses. (I check my email almost every day when I am on vacation not because I think my employer is emailing me, but because I am addicted to my phone.)

Technology's pervasiveness is as much the fault of Internet-obsessed employees as inconsiderate bosses.

In fact, one could argue that a prohibition against after-hours emailing is almost useless if it doesn't address the job pressures exacerbated by social media. Email, after all, is only one of many online communication tools available to employers. If you happen to work in public relations, or advertising, the line between personal and professional is often even blurrier; many people in these fields are required to post content to social media on behalf of their organizations — a duty that never sleeps and is rife with personal risk. Make a mistake in a rush, and your career and reputation could be in the gutter.

If your job involves social media — and even if it doesn't — it isn't unlikely that you follow your bosses and colleagues on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. If this is the case, so long as you are logged onto to one of those platforms you are effectively never out of reach of your employer.

The truth, then, is that the disappearing line between work and leisure time cannot be restored by legislation alone. It will be restored only if — in addition to the passage of progressive labour laws — we decide to commit to the deeply personal work required to kick any powerful addiction.

Emma Teitel is a columnist for the Toronto Star.

Can this needy town learn how to shrug?

COLLINS' CAPITAL
Steve Collins

Look, Ottawa, you're smart, you're beautiful, healthy, wealthy and historic. You're the capital of the planet's great pluralist democracy and the star of its 150th birthday bash.

You don't need the New York Times (or Metro, for that matter) to tell you this. And yet how easily your pretty civic head is turned by a little attention, like the Times' latest profile, which notes our humble burg has some lovely buildings on Parliament Hill and even a canal, "but it has long been dogged by a reputation as a workaday government center."

"A weekend in the city, however, proves otherwise. With a thriving food scene, a multicultural and multilingual sensibility owing to its location on the Ontario-Quebec border and an outsize night life, Ottawa is emerging from the shadow of Montreal and Toronto with new infrastructure projects, including a multibillion-dollar light-rail line."

To which the proper response would be: Thanks for noticing, New York Times. But, uh, what shadow?

And yet local media buzzed over our mention in a big-city paper. Little old us, among All the News that's Fit to Print! Us! Can you believe it? In the Times, which, after its last visit to Ottawa, approvingly reported that we had our own Wine Rack, in the middle of the "sleepy" ByWard Market.

We laughed, maybe a little too self-consciously, still glorying in the attention, no matter how lazily paid.

We went through this before with MoneySense magazine, whose list of top cities in which to live we topped from 2010 to 2012, an honour so prestigious Mayor Jim Watson would shoehorn the factoid into his public remarks at every opportunity.

In 2013, cuts to the public service put the bite on the local economy and we sank (oh, the ignominy!) to No. 6. The MoneySense props soon disappeared from the mayor's speeches.

We returned to the top spot in the magazine's hit parade last year, but I'm not entirely sure anybody here noticed. This, I would argue, is progress.

I had a similar experience as a student at Trent University the first year Maclean's magazine released their annual school rankings. My tiny, teaching-focused school, in my biased estimation the best possible place for an undergrad, didn't stand a chance against the big players with their massive endowment funds, their law and medical schools.

We landed at or near the bottom of the list. The reaction of anyone I knew? A shrug. We knew we had something special, and anyway we were already late for another freewheeling 12-student morning seminar.

The next year, the rankings grouped similar sorts of schools, and Trent suddenly surged to the top of the rankings for cute little liberal arts schools. Again we shrugged.

How I would love to see Ottawa perfect the art of the shrug, of skimming the reviews with amused curiosity rather than staking its civic self-image on a close reading. You and I already know this is the place to be; it's why we're here. Leave the Times to the tourists who have yet to discover this.

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Your essential daily news

U2's stadium tour to celebrate the 30th anniversary of The Joshua Tree will kick off in Vancouver May 12

JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

Hollywood's first lady and our empathy ambassador

THE SHOW: The 2017 Golden Globe Awards (NBC/CTV)
THE MOMENT: Meryl's speech

There was only one moment that mattered. Accepting her lifetime achievement award, Meryl Streep stood on stage. She held notes, but she didn't need them.

She said that everyone in Hollywood — in America — came from somewhere else. Then she cut to the quick: "An actor's only job is to enter the lives of people who are different from us and let you feel what that feels like," she said. "But there was one performance this year that stunned me.... There's nothing good about it. But it did its job. It made its intended audience laugh and show their teeth.

"It was that moment when the person asking to sit in the most respected seat in our country imitated a disabled reporter, someone he outranked in privilege and power and the capacity to fight back." She finished by calling on everyone to support the principled press, "because we're going to need them going forward and they'll need us to safeguard the truth."

Throughout the broadcast, background noise had buzzed from the bar. But now Streep's raw voice was the only sound. You could feel the room holding its breath.

It's impossible to do justice to how gutsy and thrilling Streep's decision was to make this speech. Most honourees speak about their careers.

Streep's been honoured so much, she's past that. This is her lifetime achievement: to have earned the ability to hold the world still for five minutes to say something necessary.

She showed all of us whose hearts are broken by Trumpism a way forward. Not through anger, but through truth.

She's our ambassador for empathy.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

FACT CHECK

Rating Streep's records

While Donald's Trump's assertion that Streep was "overrated" is an opinion, the actress holds the record for the most Academy Award nominations of any actor. She has earned 19 Oscar nods and three wins, as well as a record 29 Golden Globe nominations and eight wins, and two Emmy Awards.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The background buzz at the Golden Globes fell silent as Meryl Streep delivered her stirring speech. CONTRIBUTED

STREEP SOUNDS OFF
TRUMP & CO. REACT

Hollywood's leading lady found herself in the firing line when the president-elect woke up Monday morning.

METRO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Meryl Streep, one of the most over-rated actresses in Hollywood, doesn't know me but attacked last night at the Golden Globes. She is a Hillary flunky who lost big.
Donald Trump

This Meryl Streep speech is why Trump won. And if people in Hollywood don't start recognizing why and how — you will help him get re-elected.
Senator John McCain's daughter, Meghan McCain, a Fox News host.

It's her right, and I support her right forever — as much as it's everyone else's right to say she can't say it.
George Clooney

Now I hope that Meryl Steep will use her power and influence to ensure that TV and movies include people with disabilities with accurate and positive portrayals.
Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, president of RespectAbility, a nonprofit advocating for people with disabilities

I'm a lifelong fan of your work but also a lifelong martial artist. Please be my guest at the LA Forum on January 21st and you will see that mixed martial arts is truly artistic.
Scott Coker, the head of Bellator MMA, invites Streep to an event after her MMA jibe in the speech

It seemed to me to be a fairly straightforward exercise of her First Amendment rights, as this is the United States. [It was] a thoughtful, carefully considered message.
White House press secretary Josh Earnest

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Elisabeth Moss plays the role of Offred in the new adaptation of Margaret Atwood's A Handmaid's Tale, which has been shot in Toronto by streaming service Hulu. CONTRIBUTED

Moss finds fresh meaning in Atwood

A HANDMAID'S TALE

Actress tackles imbalance of power in new TV adaptation

Elisabeth Moss has long been prominent on the television front lines in the fight against sexism.

As secretary Peggy Olson, she rose through the ranks of misogynistic executives during the Mad Men era. But her character in Margaret Atwood's A Handmaid's Tale takes the glass ceiling to another level.

In the Canadian author's celebrated novel, Offred lives in a fundamentalist society that was once the United States. Gilead is faced with a declining birth rate and women are treated as property of the state.

The name "Offred" literally means "Of Fred," the commander to whom she is bound in servitude. The tale is once again about the imbalance of power in society, this time told through the broader lens of speculative literature.

"It's incredible that it has such meaning today and it was written more than 30 years ago," Moss says.

Moss read Atwood's work years ago and has since reread it several times "till it was dog-eared" to get insight into her character. That included meeting with Atwood herself in Toronto where the series by streaming service Hulu is shot. Co-stars include Alexis Bledel (Gilmore Girls), Samira Wiley (Orange Is the New Black) and Joseph Fiennes (Shakespeare in Love).

"We talked a bit. I asked her a few questions as to what she was thinking when she wrote it," said Moss. "But the funny thing is, it's all there in the book. If we do a scene from the book, I always read it. It's so intimate the way she wrote it. My greatest reference and the closest I can get to Margaret Atwood is in that book."

Atwood didn't give her any specific advice, said Moss.

"That's what's so cool about her. She has given us total confidence and freedom. It's allowed us to believe in ourselves that we could do it."

Moss is riding high with two critical Emmy-worthy series this year. Director Jane Campion's thriller Top of The Lake returns this year for a second season (Moss was nominated for an Emmy for the first). But A Handmaid's Tale could be her most challenging work yet.

In the premiere provided to critics, Moss is in virtually every frame. Shot up close, her face is the conduit to her heart and she remains placid on the outside while seething and conflicted inside. Much of the tale is told through voice-over.

Adapting the show to TV is something of a risk. The high-profile but joyless 1990 screen adaptation, drafted by Harold Pinter and starring Natasha Richardson and Faye Dunaway, was a flop, earning $5 million at the box office and costing $13 million.

Still, the book has had staying power and is arguably even more prescient now in the era of a President Trump, executive producer Bruce Miller said.

"One of the things that's most interesting about the book is how relevant it is all the time. None of us could ignore what was happening. I was writing the pilot script during the primaries. We were of course mindful of that."

Fiennes, who plays the commander to whom Offred is in servitude, says the show is fundamentally about the imbalance of power. He seems to be something a student of Atwood's, quoting her famous line that, "Men are afraid that women will laugh at them. Women are afraid that men will kill them."

"It makes you wonder how men may alter their use of power because of that," Fiennes told the Star in an interview. "Power is a huge thing within this series.

"When I see a president-elect that won't hand in his tax returns and who sides with (Russian President) Putin, who is a monster, that signals to me a man who is drunk on power. I find that deeply disquieting. The book still has lessons today: what a corruptive force power is. If you're not too careful you can think you're invincible."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TWITTER

Hamill turns the joke on villain Trump

Colin McNeil
Metro | Toronto

U.S. president-elect Donald Trump has been called everything from savior to super villain.

Thanks to Mark Hamill, he just got a little bit closer to the latter.

The 65-year-old actor, known for his portrayal of both Luke Skywalker and Batman villain the Joker in DC's animated universe, delighted fans this past weekend with an audio recording of himself reading a tweet from The Donald in Joker's voice.

Just 30 seconds long, the recording has Hamill channelling the Harlequin of Hate while reading out Trump's now infamous (and let's be honest, kind of sinister) New Year's tweet: "Happy New Year to all, including to my many enemies and those who have fought me and lost so badly they just don't know what to do. Love!"

For anyone who grew up in the 1990s, Hamill's portrayal of the Dark Knight's primary antagonist is iconic. His shrill laugh and growling voice has been the audio signature of the Clown Prince of Crime for 25 years, through animated films, television series and video games.

Trump courted controversy all through the U.S. presidential election for his seemingly filter-free tweeting. His unprecedented use of the social media age direct-to-the people mouthpiece has been called petty, disparaging, and revolutionary.

Mark Hamill channelled his inner Joker as he read out Donald Trump's New Year's tweet. GETTY IMAGES/YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

The tweet is labelled "The Trumpster quote #1," which, we can only hope, means there will be more to follow.

Now, he if we can only get Kevin Conroy reading Obama's final messages in a Batman voice...

MORE ONLINE metronews.ca

GOSSIP BRIEFS

Authorities arrest 17 in Kardashian investigation

French police arrested 17 people Monday in the October theft of more than $10 million worth of jewelry from Kim Kardashian West, who was tied up and locked in a bathroom after armed robbers forced their way into her rented Paris apartment.

Authorities said police seized weapons and a large amount of cash in multiple raids that took place starting around 6 a.m. in different locations in the Paris region and the south of France.

The suspects ranged in age from 23 to 72, and included several known for prior robberies and other crimes, according to a police document.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hidden Figures rockets past Star Wars in theatres

With an ongoing taste for space, moviegoers propelled the NASA drama Hidden Figures past Rogue One: A Star Wars Story at the box office.

Hidden Figures, which tells the true story of three black female mathematicians integral to the early success of the American space program, sold $22.8 million in tickets over the weekend, enough to knock Rogue One from the top spot it held for three weeks.

The Star Wars spinoff finished second with $22 million.

Hidden Figures found its first big chance to reach audiences when it expanded by more than 2,400 locations Friday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Adults travelling with mom and dad

TRAVEL TRENDS

Boom in trips for grownup clans, just pack your patience

Katrina Clarke
Torstar News Service

Wedged in the middle seat between my parents on a flight to Ireland, I turned to my mum and asked to take a look at her guide book.

"Oh now you want to know what we're doing," my mum teased. My parents had just planned our family vacation — our first as a family of adults.

It was my Vancouver-based sister, Carolyn, who proposed the idea. She is 26; I am 29. And while the four of us travelled frequently as a family when my sister and I were little — holidaying in New Zealand, Israel and Mexico — our travelling foursome splintered as we got older and busier and added significant others to the mix.

I was cautiously optimistic about this adult Clarkes-only trip and braced myself for inevitable bickering and personality clashes. But we so rarely spend time together in Canada, let alone a week travelling, so this seemed like a great chance to reconnect.

The idea, it turns out, is part of a trend travel companies have noticed: more parents are going on trips with their grown children.

"With families scattered all over the place … it's getting harder and harder to get everyone together," said Lois Farley, product manager with Great Canadian Travel Group. "(Travel) is a way to keep the family together."

G Adventures, a global adventure travel company based in Toronto, also saw a 12 per cent increase in families travelling with adult kids between 2015 to 2016, while bookings for families with young kids over the same period increased by only 5 per cent, said spokesperson Tim Chan.

As for our family vacation destination, I fantasized about kayaking in South America or skiing in Japan. But my parents wanted a country that was close, safe and easy to explore. I gave up my hopes for a far-flung location and we all agreed on going to family friendly Ireland in November. I'd been there once before, but mostly to explore Dublin pubs, so I was excited to see the pastoral lands — the emerald parts of the Emerald Isle.

It was from there we left the planning to the parents.

It's not that my sister or I are incapable of planning vacations but this trip snapped us back into a pre-2000s family dynamic. We let our parents take the wheel. Literally, my dad drove us around Ireland.

For most of the time, the dad-in-charge and mum-navigating dynamic worked and I was happiest relaxing and documenting scenery on Snapchat. But there were moments of directional indecision when I missed my adult independence and wanted to grab the wheel or bark: "Wrong way!"

Katrina Clarke and her family, Glenn, Deb and Carolyn, take a selfie at a cliff along the Dingle Peninsula on the Atlantic coast of Ireland. KATRINA CLARKE

We landed in Dublin and spent the next few days travelling north, visiting a prehistoric tomb in Brú na Bóinne, then southwest, touring the crumbling Rock of Cashel. It was in rainy, cold Cashel that I had my epiphany: one of the best parts of travelling as an adult is being able to drink alongside my parents. Quaffing pints of Guinness in a pub, I was more peer than teen.

From Cashel we drove further west to Killarney's Land-Before-Time-esque national park — where we found happy middle ground between being a family with children and being a family with, well, adult children. My sister and I bit our tongues when our parents obsessed over GPS directions and our parents said nothing when we dozed in the car, missing the take-your-breath-away scenery.

After Killarney, we wound through green pastures to the Dingle Peninsula, walked along Inch Beach and snapped selfies at the edge of cliffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

Looking back, if there was one take-away from the trip, it was that being an adult and acting like one are two different things. I didn't always succeed in the latter.

For instance, after Donald Trump's election, I initiated downwards-spiralling, impassioned political arguments, my patience wore thin during long drives, and the more time we spent together, the more pronounced everyone's idiosyncrasies became to me; my ex-military dad demanding early wake-up calls, my mum needing to check out every stone carving and my energetic sister wanting next to no downtime.

But our new family dynamic was fun. We burst into laughter when the GPS spontaneously started talking in the hotel room, triggering our nerves after a long day of driving; my sister and I ribbed my parents when they wanted to be at the airport hours earlier than necessary, and we permitted ourselves a chuckle or two when my dad cracked corny jokes.

"You wouldn't want to be a guy named Ken there," he said as we drove past Kilkenny.

HEALTH BRIEFS

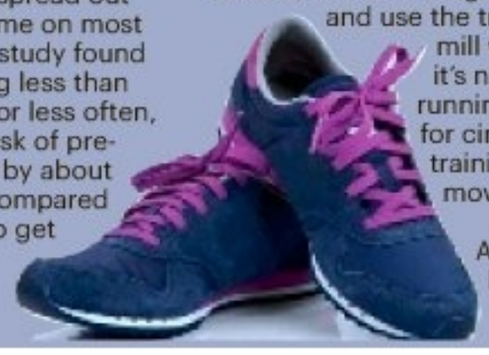
Less is more when it comes to workout times: study
New research finds surprising benefits from exercising even less than recommended amounts. Weekend warriors, who pack their workouts into one or two sessions a week, lower their risk of dying over roughly the next decade nearly as much as people who exercise more often.

Guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week, ideally spread out so you get some on most days. But the study found that exercising less than that amount, or less often, lowered the risk of premature death by about 30 per cent compared to people who get no physical activity.

Results were published Monday in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No need to run yourself to a standstill on the treadmill
Just because it's too cold for your normal three-mile outdoor run doesn't mean the treadmill has to be a monotonous exercise in staring at a blank wall.

LA-based trainers Jeanette Jenkins and Massy Arias offer the following tips for getting out of the treadmill rut. Vary the speed and incline, add arm weights and use the treadmill when it's not running for circuit training moves.



Massy Arias has more than 2 million Instagram followers, offering up various moves and inspirational messages on how working out has helped heal her depression. And even though she's nearly eight months pregnant, she's still doing some hardcore workouts.

"Treadmills don't have to be boring and don't need to keep you stagnant. If you are creative, you can turn your steady cardio run into workouts that can push the most advanced athletes."

"Changing up your pace, speed, incline and exercises every two to five minutes keeps the workout interesting so the time flies and before you know it you will have completed a total body kick butt workout," said Jenkins, founder of The Hollywood Trainer Club with clients like Pink and Alicia Keys. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FAMILY

Why children cost so much

Expecting a baby? Congratulations! Better put plenty of money in your savings account.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says the estimated cost of raising a child from birth through age 17 is $233,610, or as much as almost $14,000 annually. That's the average for a middle-income couple with two children. The estimate is based on 2015 numbers, so a baby born this year is likely to cost even more. It's a 3 per cent increase from the prior year.

Since 1960, USDA has compiled the annual report to inform — and probably terrify — budget-preparing parents. Things to know about how much it costs to raise a child:

Housing is expensive

Up to a third of the total cost is housing, accounting for 26 to 33 per cent of the total expense of raising a child. USDA comes up with those numbers by calculating the average cost of an additional bedroom — an approach the department says is probably conservative, because it doesn't account for those families who pay more to live in communities that have better schools or other amenities for children.

18%

For a middle-income couple with two children, food costs make up about 18 per cent of the cost of raising a child. Child care and education costs make up 16 per cent.

Urban vs Rural

The cost of raising a child varies in different regions. Overall, middle-income, married-couple families in the urban Northeast spent the most ($253,770), followed by those in the urban West ($235,140).

Child care on the rise

After housing, child care, education and food are the highest costs for families. Education costs have sharply risen since 1960, when USDA estimated that those expenses were around 2 per cent of child-rearing expenses.

More kids, lower costs

There is some good news for big families. Families with three or more children spend an average of 24 per cent less per child. USDA says that's because children often share bedrooms in bigger families, clothing and toys are handed down and food can be purchased in larger and more economical packages. In contrast, one-child households spend an average of 27 per cent more. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Why it seems like *everyone* is sick

Flu season is peaking at the same time as other respiratory viruses. Metro reports on the hotspots, and what you can do to protect yourself from the perfect storm of sickness.

Genna Buck
Metro | Toronto

The sounds of hacking, sneezing and sniffling fill the halls of hospitals, workplaces and schools across Canada.

We're in the thick of a whopper sickness season, for two main reasons:

One: There's a particularly nasty flu — and a lot of it — going around. Two: Everything else is going around too.

Only a fraction of those who come down with flu-like symptoms are tested, so the real case count is certainly higher, but in the last two weeks of December, 3,177 people tested positive for flu in Canada. That's a ten-fold increase over the 298 cases diagnosed in the same period in 2015.

Blame it on H3N2, said Dr. Allison McGeer, a flu researcher and director of infection control at Toronto's Mt. Sinai hospital. That's the main strain of influenza going around this year. And although the flu shot developed to fight it seems to be a good match, it might not stay that way for long, because H3N2 mutates really, really quickly.

There's more: Through illness and vaccination, most people accumulate some immunity over the years to flu strains such as H1N1 and influenza B.

"With H3N2 it's not like that," McGeer said. "I've seen older people get two H3N2 infections six months apart. You don't accumulate immunity, so you're really dependent on this year's vaccine."

So H3N2 hits the old and frail the hardest. The flu shot also doesn't work very well on them, making it doubly important for the healthy adults around them — family members and health-care workers — to get their shots, McGeer said.

Although public health people around the country are extremely busy at the moment (Dr. McGeer's pager went off twice during our 30-minute chat), she was quick to say it's not a crisis.

There's enough flu flying around that patients and health care workers have started to catch it inside the hospital, when they're being treated for something else. Wards have had to close to try to contain outbreaks, and group activities in long-term care and retirement homes have been cancelled.

Similar measures are being taken in other hot zones of widespread flu activity, like Calgary, which has seen 1,028 cases this season, said Dr. Gerry Preddy, senior medical officer of health for Alberta Health Services.

It's awful, but it's a predictable kind of awful.

There's no need for a "flu situation room" with central management of resources like hospital beds, vaccines and anti-viral medications, like there was during the swine flu pandemic of 2009 and SARS in 2003.

"That's for situations that are beyond our capacity — this is just a flu season. There is a need for a lot of communication. It is a lot of work, but we have to do it every year," Dr McGeer said.

But there is something that makes this year different: other, non-flu respiratory viruses the Public Health Agency of Canada keeps track of are peaking at the exact same time as flu.

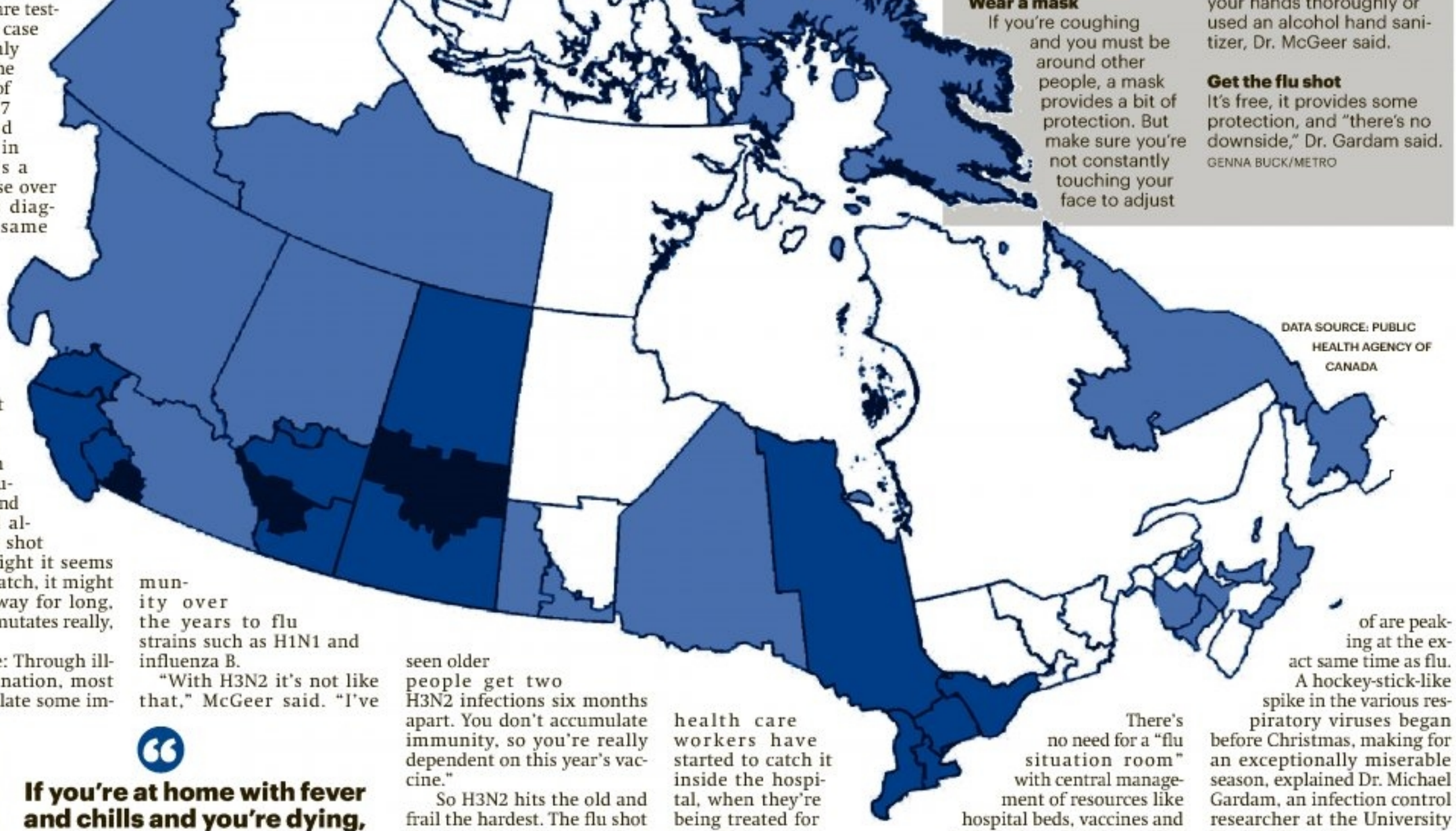
A hockey-stick-like spike in the various respiratory viruses began before Christmas, making for an exceptionally miserable season, explained Dr. Michael Gardam, an infection control researcher at the University Health Network.

In particular, there's a lot of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) about.

It has very similar symptoms to the flu and can be very dangerous to children with breathing problems and premature babies.

"My guess is we're two-thirds of the way through the peak of this," Gardam said.

"It's not just flu. I want you to get your flu shot, but we can't rely on your flu shot as your only control measure."


LEGEND
No Activity
Sporadic
Scattered cases of influenza-like illness
Widespread
Outbreaks in more than half of facilities
Localized
Outbreaks in less than half of facilities such as hospitals, schools and long-term care homes
DATA SOURCE: PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA

FLU, FLU GO AWAY...HELPFUL TIPS

Stay home if you're sick
"People come to work hacking up a lung all the time. Work from home. Teleconference. If you're at home with fever and chills and you're dying, don't go to the bloody party. It's not about you," Dr. Michael Gardam said. And if you must go to work, stay as far away from others as you can, he added.

Wear a mask
If you're coughing and you must be around other people, a mask provides a bit of protection. But make sure you're not constantly touching your face to adjust it, then not washing your hands: That could be worse than no mask at all, Dr. Allison McGeer warned.

Clean your hands
Although there's some evidence it may be airborne, most people get the flu from close personal contact. When you go to bed you should be able to remember five times during the day that you washed your hands thoroughly or used an alcohol hand sanitizer, Dr. McGeer said.

Get the flu shot
It's free, it provides some protection, and "there's no downside," Dr. Gardam said.

GENNA BUCK/METRO

If you're at home with fever and chills and you're dying, don't go to the bloody party. It's not about you.
Dr Michael Gardam

I've seen older people get two H3N2 infections six months apart. You don't accumulate immunity, so you're really dependent on this year's vaccine. Dr Allison McGeer

Maximize degree with addition of practical learning

Students seeking a degree with the added benefit of hands-on learning can opt for one of Algonquin College's degree programs, says one expert.

"You're getting the best of both worlds," says Janice Pryce, a marketing officer at the school. "Universities do well with theory and research but at the college level you get that on top of the opportunity to apply your thinking in real world situations."

Algonquin offers five honours bachelor degrees in interior design, commerce, building science, hospitality and tourism management, and early learning and community development. Honours degrees provide more conceptual sophistication, specialized knowledge and intellectual autonomy than general bachelor degrees.

"Hands-on elements are one of the biggest advantages of completing a degree at college level and our programs have practical assignments and paid co-op that ranges from one co-op experience to three depending on the program," says Pryce.

The college's five remaining degree programs are collaborative degrees with local universities. They include bachelors in information resource management, information technology (interactive multimedia and design, information technology), network technology and information technology (photonics and laser technology) with Carleton University as well as bachelor of science in nursing with the University of Ottawa.

"These programs give students a holistic education," says Pryce. "During the program, you attend both institutions at the same time and the experiences you have at each are meant to complement each other."

CONTRIBUTED

Don't miss Saint Paul's winter open house

Thinking about registering for an undergraduate or graduate degree? Drop by Saint Paul University (SPU)'s Open House on Wednesday, Jan. 25, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. and discover Ottawa's best-kept secret!

Take advantage of SPU's upcoming open house to learn more about its programs, admission process, financial aid and scholarships in a relaxed and cheerful atmosphere. Faculty and staff members will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. Four scholarships valued at $1,000 each will also be drawn, so be sure to add your name to the draw!

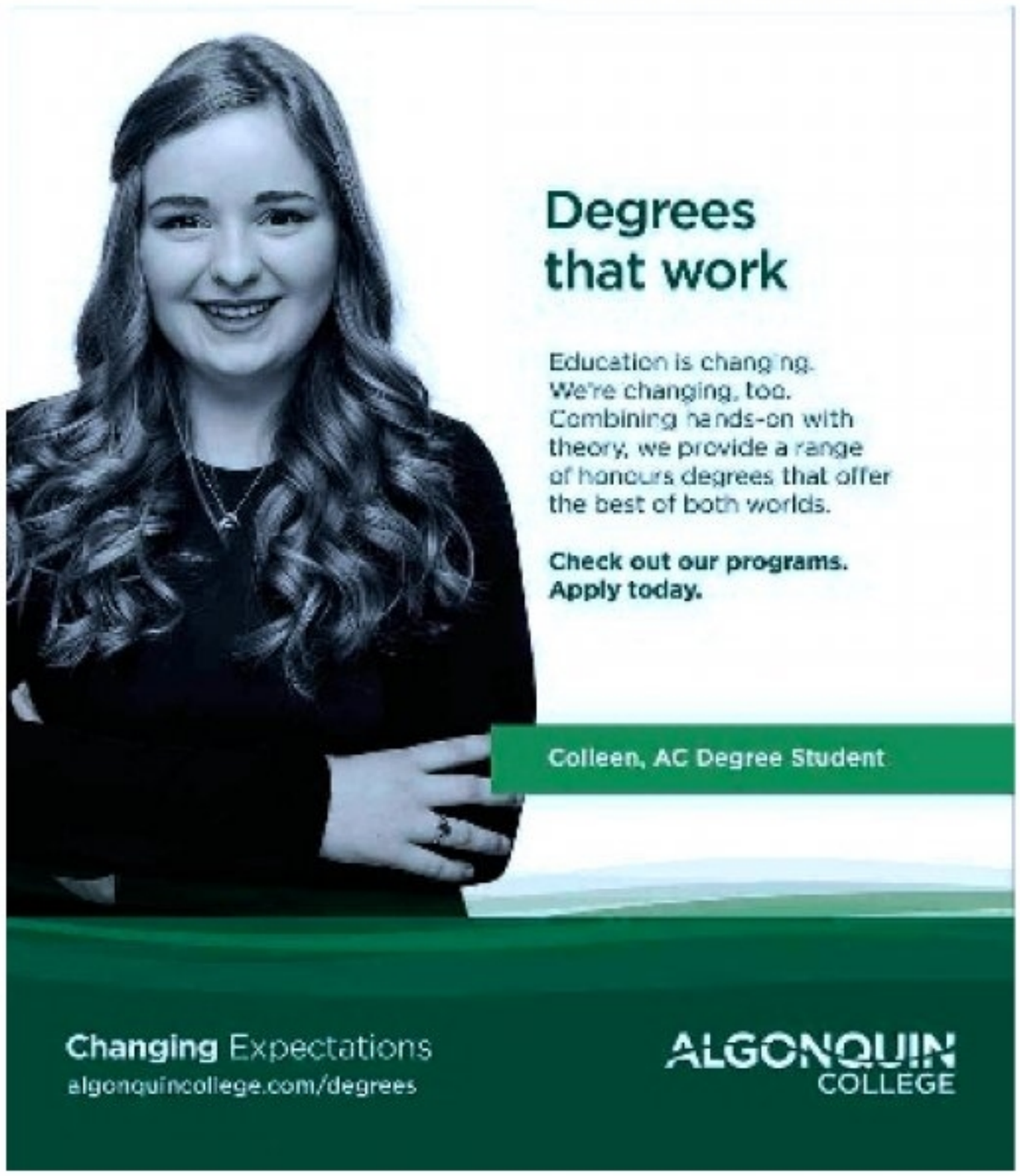
Already have a college diploma? By studying at SPU, you could receive up to 60 equivalency credits, complete your bachelor degree in two years and get a head start on your career.

Places in SPU's School of Counselling, Psychotherapy and Spirituality are in particularly high demand. If you're thinking of registering, we encourage you to attend an information session.

Register now for the open house at UStPaul.ca, take a campus tour, visit our renowned library, and discover how you can be the face of change.

CONTRIBUTED

Saint Paul University (1848) is the founding college of the University of Ottawa, with which it has been federated since 1965. Bilingual and on a human scale, it offers programs in social communication, counselling and psychotherapy, canon law, public ethics, conflict studies, philosophy, human relations, and theology.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metro SPORTS

Manny Ramirez has agreed to terms with the Kochi Fighting Dogs of Japan's independent Shikoku Island League

Scoreboard watching well under way for Sens

NHL

Ottawa relieved to have stopped skid as playoff race tightens

The Ottawa Senators didn't want to call it a must-win, but they know they can't afford long losing streaks as the race for the NHL playoffs starts to tighten.

The Senators put an end to a four-game skid Sunday night with a 5-3 win over the Edmonton Oilers heading into a week that will see them host the Pittsburgh Penguins and Toronto Maple Leafs.

While it's still early in the season, players admit scoreboard watching has begun and the Senators realize any prolonged lapses will hurt their playoff hopes with the standings being close.

With a 21-14-4 record and 46 points the Senators held a playoff spot as of Monday, but Toronto is just two points back.

"It's still really early, but we're focusing on our team, we're not focusing on the other team, but at the same time we're aware of everything that's going on around the league," said forward Derick Brassard. "We want to try and gain points every night and we're just focusing on the way we play."

Sunday night's effort was a solid group win and while it wasn't always pretty the Senators played well enough to earn the victory.

Senators head coach Guy Boucher has tinkered with lines for much of the season and Sunday the trio of Brassard, Zack Smith and Mark Stone was one of its best as they scored twice and created numerous chances.

17

Mike Condon stopped each third-period shot he faced in the Sens' 5-3 win on Sunday. The Oilers outshot them 17-3 in the final 20 minutes.

Just as impressive was the work done by Mike Hoffman, Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Tom Pyatt. While Pyatt and Pageau are counted on regularly for their defensive play, seeing Hoffman in such a role is still surprising.

Last season Hoffman was often criticized for his lack of defensive responsibility and rarely saw ice time late in a tight game. On Sunday Hoffman was on the ice with less than two minutes remaining in a one-goal contest.

"It obviously does give yourself confidence knowing that the coach believes and trusts in you," said Hoffman. "It's great for our team. That's how we get better and how we grow."

Mike Hoffman of the Senators had a goal and an assist against the Oilers at Canadian Tire Centre on Sunday, but it's his defensive play that has really pleased his coach.

JANA CHYTILOVA/FREESTYLE PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

"We're aware of everything that's going on around the league."
Derick Brassard

Boucher has been impressed with Hoffman's commitment to his defensive side of the game of late.

"It's not just the last games, it's been like that the last 15 games. He's been on a real upscale in that respect.

"I loved that line for the greatest part of that game. On one back check (Hoffman) caught up to (Connor) McDavid. That's pretty impressive. We're talking about maybe the fastest player in the league and Hoffman catches up to him."

Last season Hoffman set career highs with 29 goals and 59 points and established himself as a solid offensive player and was rewarded with a four-year contract extension. Boucher says Hoffman has taken on whatever role has been asked of him this season and isn't concerned about the label of being considered part of the "top six." THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Ronaldo garners his fourth FIFA best player award

Cristiano Ronaldo won FIFA's best player award for the fourth time Monday, after Portugal and Real Madrid won both major European titles in 2016.

Carli Lloyd of the United States won FIFA's best woman player award for the second straight year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASL cuts ties with boss

Bill Peterson is out as president of the troubled North American Soccer League, which is cutting from 12 teams to eight.

The Ottawa Fury were among the clubs to leave and will now play in the 30-team United Soccer League. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's time for him to grow.

New York Giants general manager Jerry Reese told Odell Beckham Jr., pictured, that he needs to look at some of his antics on and off the field. It was alleged the star receiver punched a hole in a wall outside the Giants' locker-room at Lambeau Field on Sunday night after a 38-13 loss to the Packers.

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Hearty Pasta e Fagioli

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Is it a soup? Is it a pasta? Who cares when it's hearty and healthy.

Ready in 35 minutes
Serves 6

Ingredients
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion diced
- 3 cloves of garlic minced
- 1 or 3 stalks of celery chopped
- 3 medium carrots sliced thinly
- 1 yellow or green zucchini, halved and then sliced
- 6 mushrooms cleaned and sliced
- 1 14 oz. can of cannelini beans
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 x 28 oz. can drained plum tomatoes
- 1 cup whole wheat tubetti pasta
- thyme and rosemary
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan

Directions

1. Sauté onion, garlic and celery in olive oil till soft, 3 minutes. Add carrots and cook 2 minutes before adding zucchini and mushrooms. Let soften before adding the stock.

2. Drain can of cannelini beans and scoop out 1/3 cup and mash roughly. Put mashed and unmashed beans into pot and stir. Cover and simmer 5 minutes.

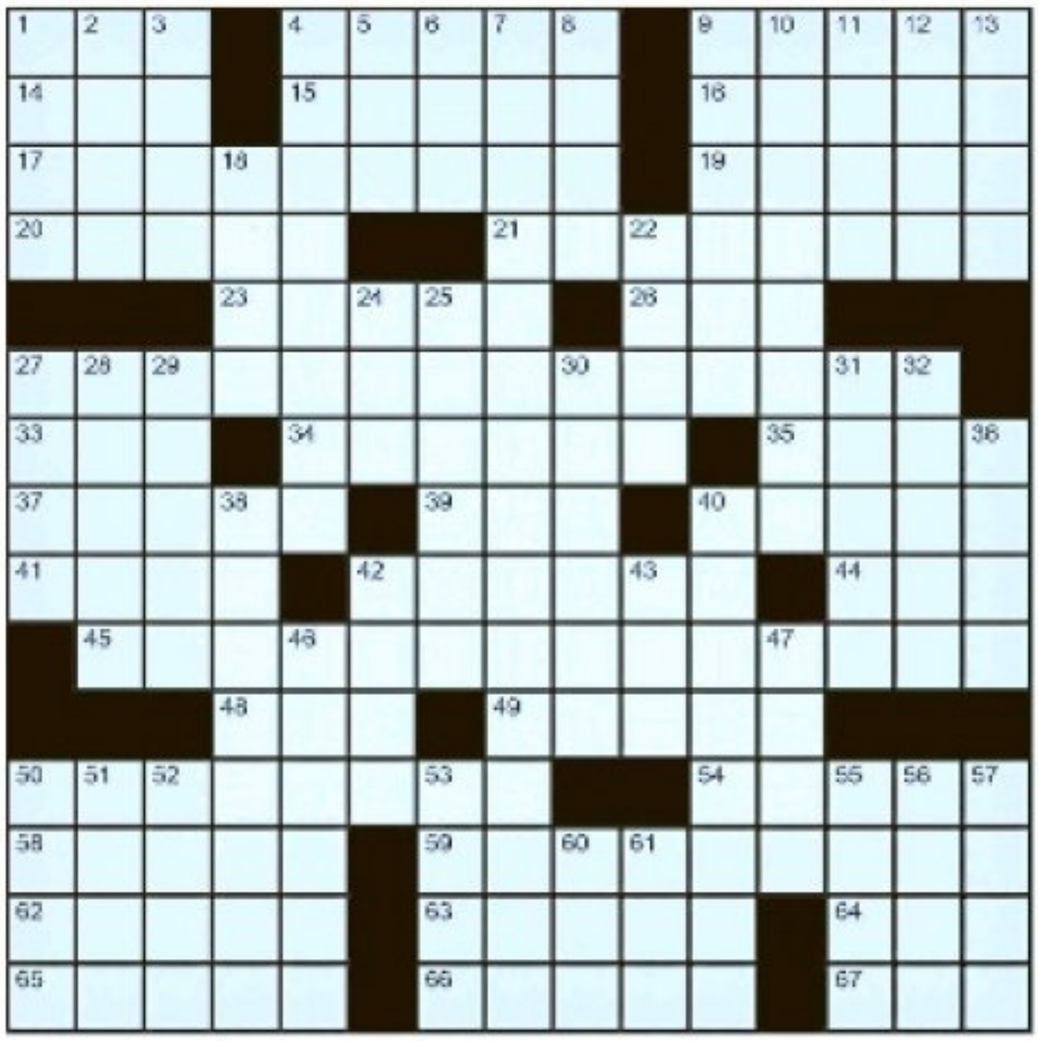
3. Drain tomatoes and add, breaking up with spoon. Simmer 5 minutes.

4. Add cup of tubetti, a good pinch of thyme and rosemary and cook for 10 minutes. Add some salt and pepper to taste.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Texter's pal
4. A belt is worn around one
9. "American _ Warrior" (NBC's obstacle course show)
14. Ghost's communication...
15. When a long lunch might end: 2 wds.
16. The Hunter constellation
17. Sweetly soothe a sour situation
19. Jabbed
20. Celebrity chef Mario Batali always wears orange ones
21. Close-ivity
23. Belonging to the "Good Times" disco group
26. Plant seeds
27. Vancouver's great Spirit of the West: 3 wds.
33. Ms. MacGraw
34. Glenn Gould played them
35. Street
37. Belonging to NYC's legendary punk club
39. "Rhoda"' production co.
40. Stephen King's fictional Maine town
41. Charlie Chaplin's last wife
42. 11:55am or 2:55pm ...in two other words
44. Culpa's partner
45. Futuristic comic series by Brian K. Vaughan and Steve Skroce (with colouring by Matt Hollingsworth) about Canadian freedom fighters: 4 wds.
48. French possessive
49. Novel's I'il opening
50. Get less noisy: 2 wds.
54. "Don't mind _ _ _!"
58. Send _ _ (Communicate via Hallmark)
59. Trailblazer
62. Not like The Fonz
63. Rent
64. Niblets holder
65. Soddy stuff
66. Laundromat
67. Timecard abbr.

DOWN
1. Pear variety
2. Bobby Orr's number
3. Island off of Newfoundland
4. Navy vessels
5. Airport tower [acronym]
6. Figure skater Midori
7. Couch potato's retro meal: 3 wds.
8. Books-carrying bag
9. "I've got this, don't worry.": 2 wds.
10. Pots and kettles and pans
11. Ancient winged goddess
12. Smokey _ Cafe (Leiber & Stoller musical revue)
13. Pluses
18. Invoice abbr.
22. Inquires
24. Here: French
25. Stuff tightly: 2 wds.
27. Prefix to 'phony' (Harsh noise)
28. Arm joint
29. Line: French
30. "Get real.": 2 wds.
31. _ Jean, "Candle in the Wind" lady
32. One saying "I bet you can't..."
36. Pair
38. "Inglourious _" (2009)
40. Fictional setting in Saskatchewan of "Corner Gas": 2 wds.
42. Burkina _ (Nation in West Africa)
43. Mtn. blaster
46. 26th Pres. Mr. Roosevelt's
47. _ _ _ (Edmonton sch.)
50. Hungry feeling
51. Frosting applier
52. Prefix to 'normal'
53. Untamed
55. Pining
56. House entrance
57. Spheres
60. Negative vote
61. 'Lact' suffix

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
One thing is certain today: You will be surprised by bosses and authority figures. That's because parents, VIPs and teachers will do something that is completely unpredictable.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Sudden opportunities to travel might fall into your lap today. Alternatively, plans for travel might be cancelled, delayed or changed. Yes, it's a crapshoot.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Double-check all details concerning inheritances, shared property, insurance issues and debt, because something unexpected will affect these areas.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
A partner or close friend will surprise you today. This person might demand more freedom in the relationship, or he or she might make an unusual suggestion. Think twice before you respond.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Equipment at work might break down today. This is a classic day for computer breakdowns. Something unexpected will create delays and detours on the job.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This is an accident-prone day for your kids, so be extra vigilant. Know where they are at all times. Social events might be suddenly cancelled or changed in some way.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Something will interrupt your home routine today. Small appliances might break down. Minor breakages could Someone unexpected might appear at your door.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is an accident-prone day for your sign, so be extra careful. Be mindful of everything you say and do. Keep your eyes open!

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Something unexpected might affect your finances and possessions today. You might find money, or you might lose money. Guard your possessions against loss or theft.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You feel rebellious today. Even if you're not aware of it, you probably are impatient. Of course, it's hard to control anything that happens today, because it's all so unpredictable!

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You feel restless today. You feel like you're waiting for the other shoe to drop. Don't act until you get all the information about what's going on.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
A friend might surprise you today. Alternatively, you might meet someone new who is avant-garde or unusual in some way.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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		1				3		

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Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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2	3	8	1	9	6	5	7	4
4	7	9	3	2	5	8	1	6
6	1	5	8	7	4	3	2	9
9	2	6	5	1	7	4	8	3
8	4	1	9	3	2	6	5	7
3	5	7	4	6	8	2	9	1
1	6	3	2	8	9	7	4	5
7	8	4	6	5	1	9	3	2
5	9	2	7	4	3	1	6	8

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